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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/S
DEPT PASS TO MCC

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [LT](#)
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION LEADER SEES RENEWABLE ENERGY AS A MONEY EARNER
FOR LESOTHO

REF: a. Maseru 388; b. Maseru 396; c. Maseru 400

¶1. Tom Thabane, leader of the All Basotho Convention party and unofficial leader of Lesotho's political opposition in Lesotho, visited the Embassy today to meet with the Chargi d'Affaires and representatives of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The meeting was quite short and focused on Thabane's desire to find funding for a project to create more sources of renewable energy. Particularly, Thabane mentioned using the full capacity of the nation's only hydroelectric power plant at Muela Dam.

¶2. During the meeting, Thabane mentioned several times the importance of keeping our friendship strong. He praised the President's message at Copenhagen, and was encouraged to learn about the possibility of follow-up MCC compacts. He agreed to bring his idea up with other opposition leaders, both within his own party and in the other opposition parties. He also agreed to bring his colleagues to MCC offices in Maseru for further discussions on the current compact and possibilities for the future. He concluded that his current positive relationship with MCC and the Embassy must continue, and that post's willingness to meet with opposition leaders is helping to "remove the air of suspicion" that has been present during discussions concerning the Land Bill.

¶3. Comment: Post was encouraged by this meeting. In past meetings, Thabane has come with an agenda, which he delivered. In this meeting he was more engaging. While uncertain exactly what Thabane hoped to accomplish through this meeting, we felt that he may have had several possible goals, including a bid to solidify his position as the leader of the opposition by being able to show his constituents that he has a strong relationship with the Embassy. In addition, as an outspoken opponent of the Land Bill, and as the leader of a party whose youth wing has consistently given out misinformation about U.S. involvement in the bill in the press, it is likely that he considers he has gotten as much political mileage out of the issue as he can, and would like to "mend fences" with the Embassy.

POWER